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THE JESUS MOVEMENT:
IT'S DEVELOPMENT AND IT'S RELATIONSHIP
TO THE ARMY CHAPEL AND CHAPLAIN'S

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by

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STATEMENT ON RESEARCH

Research material on the Jesus Movement was very easy to come by. Much of the material used in this paper has been gathered by the writer over a period of five years. Several Chaplains were kind to contribute newspaper articles and periodicals which helped to make the research much easier. The libraries at the Chaplains School and Long Island University were also used.

The bibliography included with this paper by no means covers all the material read. Only pertinent books, periodicals and magazines are included.

THE JESUS MOVEMENT: IT'S DEVELOPMENT AND IT'S RELATIONSHIP
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It is impossible to pinpoint an event in American life that can be called the beginning of the Jesus Movement. The Movement appeared on the American scene wrapped up in the terse words, youth in rebellion! Why did a youthful generation suddenly become enamored with things told them by hustlers and acid heads more than things told by parents and preachers? Why did junkies, harlots and hot heads become the heroes and wasted life become beautiful?

The youth blew their minds and suddenly adults became shrill critics speaking down to them in an alien language. Reacting in fear, adults tried to use automatic control mechanisms such as the draft, school and police to break down this authority against rebellion. This led to a sub-culture similiar to ancient Gypsy tribes, developing its own values, religions and language. Youth developed a stubborn determination not to be ruled.

Many made rounds in various rebel movements and became disillusioned as their involvement evaporated and turned into drug abuse and occult practices. Some turned to Oriental and Eastern religions because these religions unashamedly sanctioned their erotic and psychedelic adventures.

The age of a permissive society which bloomed in the eye of youth in 1965 had its times of frustration though.

"The freedom from work, from restraint, from accountability, wondrous in its inception, became banal and counterfeit. Without rules there was no way to say no, and worse, no way to say yes."¹

With the casting off of authoritarian reins, youth seemed overwhelmed by a rush of new experiences; torn between the future and the past; swept along by tidal energies; swallowing heavy doses of experiences they moved bag and baggage into a scary landscape filled with new kinds of ghosts. It became a world that was rattled, imbalanced, and filled with excesses; a world with not one to blame; no authority; contradictions pouring from all media and no one adult that could help.²

It seemed that the Lord had singled out a collection of rebellious, longhaired hippies and drug addicts for an infusion of His Holy Spirit. What a blow to all the spiritual legalists who had the Holy Spirit neatly tucked into the Church! What an unusual way to demonstrate that God is still God and that His ways are not always our ways. His Spirit can not be contained nor manipulated.³

THE SPREAD OF THE JESUS MOVEMENT IN THE WORLD

Some unknown journalist, complaining about the intensity of young street Christians, labelled them "Jesus Freaks." The term was intended

¹Jullian Wasser, "The New Rebel Cry: Jesus Is Coming," Time, (June 1971), p. 59.

²David Wilkerson, "The Jesus Revolution," The Pentecostal Evangel, (August 1971), p. 2.

³Leonard E. Le Sourd, "An Editor's Conclusions," Guideposts, (February 1973), p. 28.

to be derogatory comparing them to the youth on drugs who were called "acid or speed freaks." These young Christians were seen as a threat on the streets as they were "tripped out on Jesus." But the "Jesus Freaks" adopted the name proudly and continued to witness for the Lord.⁴ In the later part of 1971 the communication media changed their outlook on the youth culture and appropriated the "Jesus Freaks" as colorful successors to the equally colorful hippies and psychedelic drugsters.⁵

There are a number of high water marks that have contributed to the growth of the Jesus Movement. Contrary to what some state, "the movement clearly bears the stamp of California,"⁶ it appears to have a beginning in 1958 in Brooklyn, New York, with the dramatic conversion of teen age gang lord, Nicky Cruz, under the ministry of David Wilkerson, a young Pentecostal preacher.⁷ From this conversion experience came the paper back book, The Switch And The Crossblade, which sold over six million copies and greatly influenced the youth of the nation.

Seattle's "Joan of Arc," Linda Meissner, was also influenced by the ministry of Wilkerson. Miss Meissner claims to have received a theophany while doing missionary work and studying Oriental religions in Hong Kong which directed her to Seattle to work for God.⁸ Arriving in Seattle, with no specific divine task revealed, she was introduced to

⁴Martin Meyer Rosen, "Jesus's Kids Turn On Others," Christian Life, (April 1971), p. 23.

⁵Ronald M. Enroth, Edward E. Ericson, and C. Breckinridge Peters, The Jesus People, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972), p. 115.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid., Wasser, Time, p. 62.

⁸Ibid., Enroth, Ericson, Peters, The Jesus People, p. 118.

Wilkerson who was speaking to churches and small groups during the summer of 1966. Her incursion to the street ministry and the Jesus Movement came at Wilkerson's hands. Meisner immediately set out criss-crossing Seattle speaking to any small group that would hear her. Her witnessing started the Jesus Movement in Seattle.

Some writers have traced the beginning of the Movement to the 1967 flower era in San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury district but there were almost simultaneous stirrings in other areas.⁹

The rumblings of the flamboyant Arthur Blessitt, "Minister of Sunset Strip," were getting under way with the establishment of "His Place," a combination church and gospel night club located in the heart of Sunset Strip.¹⁰

A transplanted Minnesota boy by the name of Duane Pederson found his way to Hollywood in 1968 and founded the Hollywood Free Press which claims a present circulation of 425,000. This underground paper has been a success in reaching the lives of many young people.

The Christian World Liberation Front has flourished in its ministry to the street people of Berkley and the University of California campus. In July 1969, the group started an underground paper, "Right On," which many feel is the best Jesus Paper published.¹¹ This segment of the Movement has satisfied the emotions of thousands of anti-war students and was immensely effective until the end of the Vietnam war.

⁹Ibid., Wasser, Time, p. 59.

¹⁰Arthur Blessitt and Walter Wagner, Turned On To Jesus, (New York: Hawthorn Books, Incorporated., 1971), p. 1.

¹¹Ibid., Enroth, Ericson, Peters, The Jesus People, p. 102.

An academician, who taught statistics at Penn State where he was associated with the Campus Crusade for Christ, crossed over to the camp of the Movement in 1968. Jack Sparks, who earned a doctorate from Michigan State, and his wife Sally, moved to Berkley to initiate a pilot project of melting into the youth culture, as a teacher type, "hip" spiritual leader. His ministry became most effective as he let his hair grow long and youth called him, "for real."

The revival of Asbury College in Wilmore, Kentucky, can not be overlooked even though it is late coming on the scene. This spiritual experience started during a required chapel hour on Monday morning February 3, 1970, and formally lasted for seven days. Classes were suspended as the school auditorium drank up the swelling crowds of up to 1600 people. Students, ignited by the out pouring of the Holy Spirit, were sent out witnessing to Azusa Pacific College in California and Colombia, S.A.,¹²

The Movement's influence could not be confined to the States and found its roots in "Dilaram House" in Kabul, Afghanistan, under the direction of Floyd and Sally McClung, formerly from California. This house ministers to the young travelers who have flocked to the city because of cheap living and the low cost of hashish and heroin.¹³

THE SPREAD OF THE JESUS MOVEMENT INTO THE CHURCH

The organized church, steeped in its traditional theology, has been slow to open its doors to the Movement. Pastor Richard J. Anderson went to a dying church near Sierra Madre Canyon, California,

¹²Van Varner, "Revival," Guideposts, (December 1971), p. 21.

¹³Editorial, Daily News Record, May 1971, p. 16.

and was instrumental in bringing this church back to life through the Jesus People. Sierra Madre Canyon, a Bohemian enclave for more than two decades, was known as the center of drugs in the 60's. Anderson's ministry was an open door policy to those tripped out on drugs and won many of them to Christ. The Pastor declares:

"that any church, traditional or otherwise, can benefit from the Jesus Movement if it is open to learn things in the New Testament that we've always brushed over and to receive all that the Holy Spirit is doing today."¹⁴

Bethel Tabernacle of Redondo Beach is also an example of the emerging hip church. The congregation was solid blue collar denominational in 1968 but not now. Pastor Lyle Steenis says over 15,000 kids have passed through the church in the past two years and 4000 have stopped using heroin.¹⁵

Hollywood Presbyterian Church has perhaps penetrated the Movement more successfully than any other church. In early 1968 it formed the "Salt Company" with its coffee house ministry. The church also sponsored a rock musical group which proved to be an open door to invite the Movement into the church.

SOME ETHICS AND BELIEFS OF THE JESUS MOVEMENT

The Jesus Movement not only rejected the material values of conventional America but the prevailing wisdom of American theology,¹⁶ contained within the traditional church and struck out to build its own ethics and beliefs. With the ditching of school, parents, jobs, and

¹⁴Ibid., Enroth, Ericson, Peters, The Jesus People, p. 100.

¹⁵Brian Vachon, "The Jesus Movement," Look, (February 1971), p. 20.

¹⁶Ibid., Wasser, Time, p. 56.

responsibility, they became itinerate "evangelists." For the most part the Movement became anti-intellectual, anti-cultural, anti-social and anti-historical. Everything, to them, seemed to be colored by apocalyptic mentality. There seemed to be no time for the luxury of college or to redeem the social institutions. There was only time for preaching and repenting.

The Movement became overwhelmingly experience oriented and drove into the streets with their simple most important teaching, "Jesus Saves!"

Speaking in tongues became a prominent part of the Movement. Some advocated that tongues validated one's experience with God while others, such as John Sherrill of Guideposts, feels it is an spiritual emotional release,¹⁷ while Reverend Kenneth Pagard says:

"it is only one part of the package and a very minor part. In our church we hardly ever mention speaking in tongues. It is commonly accepted but it is primarily for use in private devotions."¹⁸

DISCIPLINE AND STRUCTURE OF THE JESUS MOVEMENT

It was a bit difficult at times for people to live in an unstructured society that the Movement fostered in its beginning. Dr. Robert Carney states that the Movement can't last because they do not believe in a system of structure and authority.¹⁹ Many are trying to bring order to the Movement in an attempt to save it. This is being manifested through an educational type system.

The "Light and Power House" at Westwood, California, operated by

¹⁷John L. Sherrill, They Speak With Other Tongues, (New York: Pyramid Publications., 1964), p. 30.

¹⁸Editorial, Minneapolis News, November 19, 1971, p. 20.

¹⁹Robert Carney, "Motivation," Lecture delivered at a training conference, Canal Zone, January 11, 1973.

Hal Lindsay and Bill Counts is one organization attempting to combat shallowness on the part of the revolutionaries by providing an in-depth Bible study to the youth culture.

Dr. Harvey Schaeffer of L'Abri, Switzerland states that:

"Many young people who come L'Abri after receiving the Holy Spirit, lack balance in their faith. They're centered on the Holy Spirit of Jesus. God the Father is left out. We try to help them understand the Trinitarian basics of the Christian Faith."²⁰

Bethel Tabernacle, along with many other churches, has started an organized Bible study where converts are expected to attend.

Order seems to be gradually coming to this explosive Movement of young people. Hopefully their energies can be harnessed and directed into the church, giving organization and a home to the Movement and new life to many churches.

THE JESUS MOVEMENT WITHIN THE ARMY

The Army Chaplain has not sat idly watching the Movement grow but has been actively involved advising and supporting when possible, small groups of the Movement in the military. The writer's first acquaintance of the Jesus Movement was in a Battalion Chapel of the 173rd Airborne Brigade, Beinh Hoa, Vietnam, during the fall of 1966. Merlin Carother's book, Prison to Praise, deals with his work with the Jesus Movement at Fort Bragg, NC, and Vietnam. Recent interviews with Chaplains returning from Europe, Alaska and Korea, reveals that Chaplains are actively at work with the Movement in their Chapels.

²⁰Ibid., Le Sourd, Guideposts, p. 27.

"The Jesus Movement in the military is growing. Sparks are seen around the world. A love jamboree at Fort Lewis, with singing and testimonies and praising God. And a special weekly ecumenical charismatic worship service filled with innovations glorifying God.

A weekly Bible study and prayer group at Cameron Station, VA, during the lunch hour.

Richard Hogue, often called "God's man for the now generation," appeared during a Spiritual Revolution Now Festival featuring Christian folk groups in the Fort Hood, TX, area. Some 500 soldiers attended in one evening, many making decisions for Christ.

Dr. A. Purnell Bailey, well-known radio minister and syndicated columnist, preached at Fitzsimons Army Hospital, CO, on moral issues at hand.

A chaplain at Tompkins Barracks, Schwetzingen, Germany, conducted an Open Bible Contest for his troops.

Self-help coffee house ministry established at Wurtzburg, Germany, for artillerymen. A Religion Centered Life Workshop also slated. Expanding on the purpose of the coffee house, a young Spec. 4 stated, This is not a drug, alcohol or race oriented program but an attempt to make faith contemporary and relevant. It is aimed at all men."

Folk music and dialogue sermons find their way into the Fort Jackson, SC, chapel program.

Christian concert conducted at Fort Richardson, AK.

Youth With a Mission, an international movement of young people from varied denominations dedicated to presenting Jesus Christ, opens One Way coffee house at Fliegerhorst Kaserne, Germany.

Four-day revival conducted at Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam. Chaplain carried revival into hooches, finding an open forum at every turn.

Sunday evening services with mod outlook organized at Fort Leonard, MO. One night more than 2,200 attended.

"Jesus Christ Superstar" presented by Fort Carson, CO, little theater group.

Guitar and folk singing highlighting new look at Fort Carson chapel services.

Bible discussion group begins at Fort Hood, TX.

"Grannies" marks the spot where Jesus people gather at Fort

Wainwright, AL, for singing, clapping hands and real fellowship, offering one and all their Jesus Christ."²¹

The Army Chaplains have stood true to their professional calling of bringing God to all people. Their concern to meet the needs of all people has been proven true in their ministries to the youth of the Jesus Movement.

CONCLUSION

Theologian Martin Marty, of the University of Chicago Divinity School, feels that Jesus People, frustrated by a complex society that will not yield to their single minded devotion, may well disband in disarray but they will have greatly helped Christianity.²²

Look and Guideposts writer, Brian Vachon, returned a year later to California to visit the Movement and see how it was progressing. It was during this inspiring visit that he dropped his note pad and accepted Christ as his Saviour. He feels the Movement is no fad but is here to stay.

Time quotes that:

"the Movement is something quite a bit larger than a theological Hula-Hoop, something more lasting than a religious Woodstock."²³

Mary Harder and Robert Simmons, under the direction of Professor James Richardson, head of their doctoral program at the University of Nevada, lived with the Jesus Movement for a year in California. Their conclusion was that the Movement will be everlasting and its members

²¹Don Mallicoat, "The Jesus People," Soldiers, (December 1971), p. 27.

²²Ibid., Wasser, Time, p. 63.

²³Ibid., p. 59.

unlikely to drift back to their former life as wondering street people.²⁴

The Movement seems to be here to stay. It's form is changing as the church reaches out and takes it under her wings. With the change comes organization, strength, education, a home and finances. The church and the clergy must not become staid with this Movement for it is a rebellious child and once again could reject relationships with the church and move out into the world on it's own.

²⁴Editorial, Seattle Post, February 6, 1971.

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